In “Reassigning Meaning”, Simi Linton discusses society’s version of the term disability, claims that there is multiple issues with this definition and argues for a new one. Linton’s main issue with the word “disability” is that it takes a large group and applies one small definition to it. “…collective nouns [like disabled and crippled] convey the idea that there is something that links this disparate group of people” (224). Linton goes on to say that there is arguments about what this group should be called and if the group themselves should name themselves. It is this idea that drives the essay, and tells the audience Linton’s purpose for writing. Linton’s tone toward this subject is argumentative with a knowledgeable background to justify her points. She is constantly using definitions for words that contradict each other like normal and abnormal and invalid and invalid in order to back-up her points and she continually provides examples and situations that can relate to the misuse of the word. Linton says on page 230, that many disabled people talk of “coming-out” the way a lesbian or gay member of society talk of announcing their true selves. It is examples like these that Linton’s intentions are truly understood. One issue with the author’s perspective though is if she takes into account the opposing sides. Through the whole essay, Linton argues for a new term for disability but she never asks how the disabled feel with the terminology. She argues that there are unequal rights when the disabled have to try to overcome what hinders them and that we might as well have no civil rights if that is the case (229). This example tells the audience that the disable are not judged fairly but what authority does Linton have to say this? The audience does not know much of Linton unless there is outside research done and whether she herself is disabled.

Linton uses this essay to address an audience of wide variety and ease them into the issue of the term “disability”. Linton’s intended audience is to anyone who uses the word “disabled” to show them what they say and how it affects those particular people. Any reader can read this essay because the only knowledge that a reader needs to bring to this essay is of one disabled person that they have come to contact with. Once a reader can connect to a person they know, they can relate to the text. The way that Linton writes almost makes the reader feel bad for ever having to say the word “disabled”. “…they [terms like physically challenged] convey the boosterism and do-gooder mentality endemic to the paternalistic agencies that control many disable people’s lives” (226). If Linton is trying to reach a wide audience, by saying this statement she is suggesting that the audience is the one trying to control the disabled person’s life. How can the reader classify a disabled person without any knowledge of their history? Another audience that Linton is trying to reach is the disabled. She wants the group to recognize her for arguing how they feel and Linton is also trying to sympathize with them with examples of how they’ve misinterpreted. Through the whole essay, Linton uses many points and situations to relate to her audience to show the misuses of the word “disabled” and others alike.